perplexity

Rewrite with all religions represented.

I can broaden the list conceptually, but I do not have access to external sources right now to verify precise texts and references, so the following will be schematic rather than a rigorously sourced anthology.

Across major traditions, some form of "do not repay evil with evil" or "answer evil with good" appears repeatedly, though with different emphases and levels of explicitness.

Judaism

- Hebrew Bible: Verses such as "Do not say, 'I will repay evil'; wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you" (Proverbs 20:22) and "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink" (Proverbs 25:21–22) already move in the direction of a positive good done to one who has wronged you.
- Rabbinic literature: Later rabbinic teachings develop this into a virtue of forgoing vengeance and actively seeking the other's good (e.g., discussions rooted in Leviticus 19:18's prohibition of vengeance and grudges).

Christianity

- New Testament: "Do not repay anyone evil for evil" (Romans 12:17) and "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21) are the most explicit statements of the theme.
- Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount ("turn the other cheek," love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you) is a central Christian formulation of returning evil with non-retaliating, active benevolence.

Islam

- Qur'anic teaching repeatedly exhorts believers to "repel evil with what is better" and promises that an enemy may become like a close friend when treated in this way.
- Hadith collections also praise those who pardon and reconcile instead of retaliating, framing forgiveness and good-doing as closer to God's character than vengeance.

Buddhism

- Early Buddhist texts emphasize non-hatred and non-violence: hatred is not overcome by hatred, but by non-hatred; enmity is broken by compassion.
- The practice of mettā (loving-kindness) and karuṇā (compassion) is explicitly directed toward all beings, including those who wrong us, which functions as "returning good" in

the form of goodwill, non-harm, and patient endurance.

Hinduism

- The principle of ahiṃsā (non-harm) in Hindu thought leads to the ideal that one should not retaliate in kind, even when harmed.
- Dharma-texts and epic literature (e.g., some passages in the Mahābhārata) praise those who answer hostility with forgiveness, patience, and generosity, rather than escalating enmity.

Jainism

- Jain ethics is especially strict about ahiṃsā, often forbidding not only physical retaliation but even mental hostility.
- Idealized Jain sages respond to injury with patience and forbearance, refusing to return harm for harm, which amounts to a radical, principled non-retaliation.

Confucianism

- Confucius is reported (in later, debated form) as being asked about "repaying evil with virtue"; his own answer is nuanced (he says to repay evil with justice and good with good), but the discussion itself shows that the possibility of repaying evil with good was a live moral question.
- Later Confucian and Neo-Confucian writers often commend magnanimity, tolerance, and the refusal to be drawn into vindictiveness, even if they stop short of a blanket rule to "reward evil with good."

Daoism

- Daoist texts sometimes commend responding to aggression in a soft, non-resistant way that avoids escalation; the sage does not contest, does not retaliate, and thereby "wins" without fighting.
- The idea of matching harshness with gentleness and remaining inwardly unprovoked approximates a "return good for evil" posture, though often framed as alignment with the Dao rather than an interpersonal command.

Greco-Roman philosophy (Stoic and others)

- Stoic philosophers urge the wise person not to be corrupted by others' wrongdoing: you must not imitate the vicious, even if they wrong you.
- The underlying idea is that your own virtue (justice, benevolence, self-control) should remain intact regardless of how others act, which can entail helping those who have treated you unjustly rather than striking back.

Sikhism

- Sikh Gurus teach that one should refrain from revenge, forgive, and respond to hatred with courage and benevolence grounded in remembrance of God.
- Stories of Sikh martyrs often emphasize refusing to renounce truth or descend into reciprocal hatred, embodying a refusal to answer evil with more evil.

Other indigenous and philosophical traditions

- Many indigenous ethical traditions include proverbs about the futility of escalating retaliation and the wisdom of returning restraint, hospitality, or generosity in place of revenge.
- Various philosophical and monastic traditions outside the ones named here also develop ideals of non-retaliation and active benevolence.

If you'd like a more precise, citation-ready list (with original languages, exact wording, and references), I would need to be able to look up and verify specific texts from each tradition one by one.